

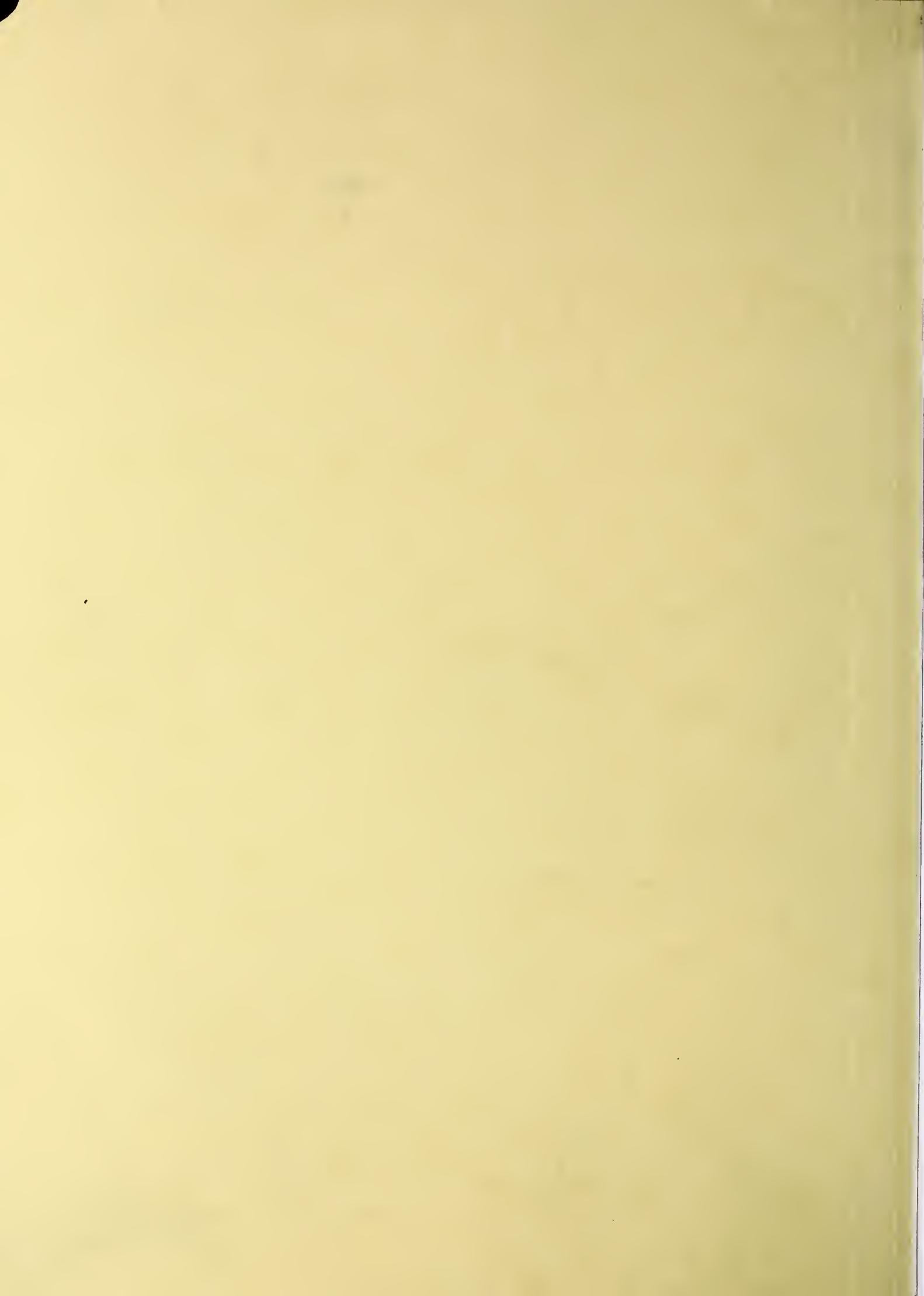
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MEMORANDUM



# Civil War Men in Ranks

John Summerfield Staples

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

*S* 176 Pa.D.Mil.  
John S. Staples  
Pvt., Co. C, 176 Reg't Pa. (Drafted) Mil. Inf.  
Appears on Company Muster Roll  
for *Jan 27t* 1863.  
Present or absent *absent*  
Stoppage, \$ *100* for  
Due Gov't, \$ *100* for  
Remarks: *Sick in hos  
pit al at Newborn  
N.C.*

Book mark:

*J Underwood*  
(354) *Copyist.*

*S* 176 Pa.D.Mil.  
John S. Staples  
Pvt., Co. C, 176 Reg't Pa. (Drafted) Mil. Inf.  
Appears on Special Muster Roll  
for *dated 27t 1863.*  
Present or absent  
Stoppage, \$ *100* for  
Due Gov't, \$ *100* for  
Remarks: *Sick in U.S.  
Gen Hospital at  
Newborn N.C.*

Supposed to be Special Muster  
for April 10, 1863.

Book mark:

*J Underwood*  
(359) *Copyist.*

*S* 176 Pa.D.Mil.  
John S. Staples  
Pvt., Co. C, 176 Reg't Pa. (Drafted) Mil. Inf.  
Appears on Company Muster Roll  
for *Mcbr. 1863.*  
Present or absent *absent*  
Stoppage, \$ *100* for  
Due Gov't, \$ *100* for

Remarks: *Sick in U.S.  
Gen Hospital at  
Newborn N.C.*

Book mark:

*J Underwood*  
(358) *Copyist.*

John S Staples

Pvt, Co. H, 2 Reg't D. C. Infantry.

Appears on

## Company Muster Roll

for May 1 June, 1865.Present or absent AbsentStoppage, \$ 100 forDue Gov't, \$ 100 forRemarks: On duty as clerk at Capt Fisher's Office Alexandria Va Due  
center E. M. House 8.

Book mark:

(238)

Bellon  
Copyist

John S Staples

Pvt, Co. H, 2 Reg't D. C. Infantry.

Appears on Returns as follows:

Oct 1/64 Enlisted in Regt  
 Oct 1/64 in Wash D. C.  
 June 1/65 Elk Pt. Mass.  
 June 20.  
 Aug 1/65 Ex ord W. st  
 Regt. Houspi.

Book mark:

(546)

Person

John S Staples

Pvt, Co. H, 2 Reg't D. C. Infantry.

Age 20 years.

Appears on Co. Muster-out Roll, dated

Alexandria Va, Sept 12, 1865.Muster-out to date Sept 12, 1865.Last paid to June 30, 1865.

Clothing account:

Last settled 186; drawn since \$ 100 43Due soldier \$ 100; due U. S. \$ 31 19 100Am't for cloth'g in kind or money adv'd \$ 102 100Due U. S. for arms, equipments, &c., \$ 100Bounty paid \$ 66 67 100; due \$ 100

Remarks:

Book mark:

(861)

Bellon

Copyist

1 2 | D. C.

John S. Staples

Pvt., Co. H, 2 Reg't D. C. Infantry.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

for Mar & Apr., 1865.

Present

Present or absent

Stoppage, \$ 100 for

Due Gov't, \$ 100 for

Remarks: Due 21 for 1 letter and  
number 2 cte

Book mark:

Ballou

Copyist

(358)

1 2 | D. C.

John Staples

Pvt., Co. H, 2 Reg't D. C. Infantry.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

for Nov & Dec., 1864.

Present

Present or absent

Stoppage, \$ 100 for

Due Gov't, \$ 100 for

Remarks:

Book mark:

Ballou

Copyist

(358)

1 2 | D. C.

John S. Staples

Pvt., Co. H, 2 Reg't D. C. Infantry.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

for July & Aug., 1865.

Present

Present or absent

Stoppage, \$ 100 for

Due Gov't, \$ 100 for

Remarks:

Book mark:

Ballou

Copyist

(358)

*S* | 176 Pa. D. Mil.

John S. Staples  
Pvt., Co. 6, 176 Reg't Pa. Drafted Mil. Inf.  
Age 18 years

Appears on

Company Muster-in Roll

of the organization named above. Roll dated

Phil. Pa Nov 3, 1862.

Muster-in to date Nov 3, 1862.

Drafted for duty and enrolled:

When Nov 3, 1862.

Where Philadelphia

Period 9 months.

Remarks:

Book mark:

*J. Underwood*  
(25c) Copyist.

*S* | 176 Pa. D. Mil.

John S. Staples  
Pvt., Co. 6, 176 Reg't Pa. Drafted Mil. Inf.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

for Oct 16 to Dec 31, 1862

Present or absent Present

Stoppage, \$ 100 for

Due Gov't, \$ 100 for

Remarks: *Substitute*

Book mark:

*J. Underwood*  
(35c) Copyist.

*S* | 2 D. C.

John Staples  
Pvt., Co. H, 2 Reg't D. C. Infantry.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

for Jan 4, 1865, 1865.

Present or absent Absent

Stoppage, \$ 100 for

Due Gov't, \$ 100 for

Remarks: *Absent on duty*

Book mark:

*Billie*  
Copyist.

John S. Staples

Co. 2, 176 Reg't Pa. (Drafted) Mil. Inf.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

May 1<sup>st</sup> 1863.

Present or absent

Oppage, \$ 100 for

ue Gov't, \$ 100 for

Remarks: Discharged May  
17/63 - On sur  
geons certificate  
Disability Stanley  
Hosp'l N. Y.

Book mark:

J. Anderson  
(858) Copyist.

S | 2 | D. C.

John S. Staples

Co. 2, 2 Reg't D. C. Infantry.

Appears on

Company Descriptive Book

of the organization named above.

## DESCRIPTION.

Age 20 years; height 5 feet 3 inches.

Complexion dark

Eyes blue, hair brown

Where born Penna

Occupation Laborer

## ENLISTMENT.

When Oct 3 1861

Where Washington D. C.

By whom Abraham Lincoln, term 1 yrs.

Remarks: Representative Recruit

for Abraham Lincoln 3  
Sub-District D. C.

Ross

(1883g) Copyist.

John S. Staples

Co. 2, 176 Reg't Pa. Drafted Mil. Inf.

Age 18 years.

Appears on Co. Muster-out Roll, dated

Philadelphia Pa Aug 1<sup>st</sup>, 1863.

Muster-out to date 186 .

Last paid to , 186 .

Clothing account:

Last settled , 186 ; drawn since \$ 100

Due soldier \$ 100 ; due U. S. \$ 100

Am't for cloth'g in kind or money adv'd \$ 100

Due U. S. for arms, equipments, &amp;c., \$ 100

Bounty paid \$ 100 ; due \$ 100

Remarks: Discharged by  
Surgeons certificate  
of Disability May 5  
1863 - at Stanley Hosp'l  
Newbern N. Y.

Book mark:

J. Anderson  
(261) Copyist.

S 1 2 | D. C.

John D. Staples  
Pvt

Appears with rank of..... on

Muster and Descriptive Roll of a Detach-  
ment of U. S. Vols. forwarded

for the 2 Reg't D. C. Infantry. Roll dated

Washington, DC, Oct 3, 1864.

Where born Pennsylvania

Age 20 yrs; occupation labor

When enlisted Oct 3, 1864.

Where enlisted Washington, DC

For what period enlisted 11 years.

Eyes Blue; hair Brown

Complexion Dark; height 5 ft 3 in.

When mustered in Oct 3, 1864.

Where mustered-in Washington, DC

Bounty paid \$ 100; due \$ 100

Where credited 3d Sub Dist. DC

Company to which assigned —

Remarks: Recruit for

Abraham Lincoln

Book mark:

Daniel

(839)

Copyist

Representative No. 33.  
Recruiter  
SUBSTITUTE

VOLUNTEER ENLISTMENT.

District  
STATE OF

*To be entered when  
subd. of* TOWN OF

Columbia



Washington D.C.

I, John S. Staples, born in the State of Pennsylvania, aged 27 years, and by occupation a Labourer, DO HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE to have agreed with Abraham Lincoln, Esq., of 3 subd. of Columbia, to become his Substitute in the Military Service, for a sufficient consideration paid and delivered to me, on the first day of October, 1864; and having thus agreed with said Abraham Lincoln, I DO HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE to have enlisted this first day of October 1864, to serve as a Soldier in the Army of the United States of America, for the period of THREE YEARS, unless sooner discharged by proper authority: I do also agree to accept such bounty, pay, rations, and clothing, as are, or may be, established by law for soldiers. And I do solemnly swear that I will bear true and faithful allegiance to the United States of America; that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies or opposers whomsoever; and that I will observe and obey the orders of the President of the United States, and the orders of the Officers appointed over me, according to the Rules and Articles of War.

SWORN and subscribed to, at Washington D.C.  
this 1 day of October, 1864  
BEFORE Capt. Reg. M.R.  
Brown & Marshall  
DC.

John S. Staples

We certify, on honor, That we have carefully examined the above-named Volunteer Substitute agreeably to the Regulations, and that, in our opinion, he is free from all bodily defects and mental infirmity which would in any way disqualify him from performing the duties of a soldier; that he was entirely sober when enlisted; that he is of lawful age, (not under 18 years;) and that, in accepting him as duly qualified to perform the duties of an able-bodied soldier, and as a Substitute in lieu of Abraham Lincoln, drafted in New Castle Co. Draft, 1864, we have strictly observed the Regulations which govern in such cases. This soldier has blue eyes, brown hair, dark complexion; is 5 feet 3 inches high.

Capt. J. M. Wilson  
Capt. 1 Reg. M.R. Provost Marshal

Commissioner of Board

Surgeon of Board

Representatives Return

DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE.

I, John S. Staples, desiring to ENLIST in the Army of the United States, for THREE YEARS, **Do declare**, That I am Twenty years and 6 months of age; that I have never been discharged from the United States service on account of disability or by sentence of a court martial; and I know of no impediment to my serving honestly and faithfully as a soldier for Two years.

GIVEN at Washington D.C.  
the 1 day of October 1864

WITNESS:

J. J. Otto John S. Staples

No. John S. Staples  
Enlisted at Washington D.C.  
As Substitute for  
Abraham Lincoln  
On the 1 day of October 1864

By

J. C. Petrie  
Francis M. Blackford

Jac. B. Keating  
Board of Enrollment,  
1st Dist. of Wash.

John S. Staples

ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES  
CERTIFICATE  
OF DISABILITY FOR DISCHARGE.



Private Soldier *S. D. Staples*

of Captain *Warwick*

Company, ( ) of the 176<sup>th</sup> Regiment of United States  
was enlisted as a substitute by Govt. Curtis of  
the Pa. Militia Regiment of Philadelphia  
on the 30 day of November 1861, to serve Four years; he was born  
in Monroe Co. in the State of Penn. is 15  
years of age, 5 feet 7 inches high, light complexion, light eyes,  
light hair, and by occupation when enlisted a Blacksmith. During the last two  
months said soldier has been unfit for duty as days.  
*Typically he was in the middle of a malarial fever and is not yet  
able to walk.*

STATION : *New Bern N.C.*

DATE : May 5<sup>th</sup> 1865

*C. Horner*

*Surgeon in Charge*  
*Stanley Gulf Hospital*  
*Commanding Company*

I CERTIFY that I have carefully examined the said S. D. Staples of  
Captain Warwick Company, and find him incapable of performing the duties of a soldier  
because of great debility broken down systems the result  
of typhoid fever of nearly four months continuance He will  
not be able to perform the duties of a soldier for at least one month  
at this time of enlistment extinguished in 2 months

DISCHARGED, this 5<sup>th</sup> day of May 1865 at New Bern N.C.

*C. Horner*  
*Surgeon in Charge*  
*Stanley Gulf Hospital*  
*Commanding the Regt.*

The soldier desires to be addressed at

Town Monroe County Monroe

State Pennsylvania

\* See Note 1 on the back of this.

† See Note 2 on the back of this.

1861. Vol. 100.  
NOTE 1. 1, 109.

The company commander will here add a statement of all the *facts* known to him concerning the disease or wound, or cause of disability of the soldier; the time, place, manner, and all the circumstances under which the injury occurred, or disease originated or appeared; the duty, or service, or situation of the soldier at the time the injury was received or disease contracted, stating particularly whether the injury was received or the disease contracted in the line of his duty; and whatever other facts may aid a judgment as to the cause, immediate or remote, of the disability, and the circumstances attending it.

When the *facts* are not known to the company commander, the certificate of any officer, or affidavit of other person having such knowledge, will be appended—as the surgeon in charge of a hospital, the officer commanding a detachment of recruits, &c., &c.

NOTE 2.

When a *probable* case for pension, *special care* must be taken to state the *degree* of disability—as  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$ , &c., &c.; to describe particularly the disability, wound, or disease; the extent to which it deprives him of the use of any limb or faculty, or affects his health, strength, activity, constitution, or capacity to labor or earn his subsistence. The surgeon will add, from his knowledge of the facts and circumstances, and from the evidence in the case, his professional opinion of the cause or origin of the disability. In the case of discharges by Medical Inspectors, the last paragraph will state that the "discharge was given by consent of the soldier, after a personal examination, and for disability, the nature, degree, and origin of which are correctly described in the within certificate."

Par. 1220 Regulations, Edit. 1861.

Medical officers, in giving certificates of disability, are to take particular care in all cases that have not been under their charge; and especially in epilepsy, convulsions, chronic rheumatism, derangement of the urinary organs, ophthalmia, ulcers, or any obscure disease liable to be feigned or purposely produced; and in no case shall such certificate be given until after sufficient time and examination to detect any attempt at deception.

DIRECTIONS.

This certificate will be made out in *duplicates* by the soldier's company commander, or other officer commanding the separate detachment to which he belongs, and sent by him to the surgeon who has charge of the hospital where the soldier is sick. The surgeon will then fill out and sign the surgeon's certificate, and forward these papers to the regimental, detachment, or post commander, who will forward them, with his action endorsed thereon, through the proper channel, to his division commander; or, if the troops are not attached to a division, to his corps, department, or other commander or officer to whom the authority to discharge enlisted men may be specially delegated.

These certificates, after having received the action of the highest authority to which they are required to be sent, will be returned through the same channel to the regimental, post, or detachment commander, who will, if the discharge is authorized by the endorsement of the proper authority, sign the soldier's discharge, and the last certificate on this paper; see that the soldier is furnished with the proper final statements in duplicate, and forward **BOTH** of these certificates *direct* to the Adjutant General, United States Army, at Washington, D. C.; they will not under any circumstances be given into the hands of the soldier.

5682  
CERTIFICATE OF DISABILITY FOR DISCHARGE

IN THE CASE OF  
John D. Gaffey  
a Private Co. C  
176<sup>d</sup> Reg't of Pa. Mil.

Officer  
J. H. Snelling  
Surgeon Reg't.  
Med. Director Co.  
10<sup>th</sup> Army Corps.

Vol. Ops. 18<sup>th</sup> Army Corps  
Received May 5 1863  
Job Discharged  
By Command of  
Maj. Gen. J. H. Foster  
Adj'tant General's Office,

May 25 1863.

By J. H. Snelling, Surgeon Officer  
Maj. Gen. D. C.

Received (A. G. Office) \_\_\_\_\_, 186 .

May 5



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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

FEBRUARY 3, 1910.

Mr. A. MITCHELL PALMER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Library and ordered to be printed.

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## A BILL

To erect a monument to the memory of John Summerfield Staples  
at Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*  
3       That the Secretary of War be, and he is hereby, authorized  
4       and directed to erect a suitable memorial monument on the  
5       court-house square at Stroudsburg, Monroe County, Penn-  
6       sylvania, to the memory of John Summerfield Staples, late of  
7       the Second District of Columbia Infantry, who served  
8       through the civil war as the representative recruit for Abra-  
9       ham Lincoln, then President of the United States.

10       SEC. 2. That for the above purpose the expenditure of  
11       the sum of fifteen thousand dollars, or so much of said sum as  
12       may be necessary, be, and the same is hereby, authorized.  
13       This sum shall be expended by direction of the Secretary of  
14       War or such officer as he may designate: *Provided*, That the

- 1 money hereby authorized shall be drawn from time to time
- 2 only as may be required during the progress of the work and
- 3 under the requisition of the Secretary of War.

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## A BILL

---

To erect a monument to the memory of John Summerfield Staples at Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania.

---

By Mr. A. MITCHELL PALMER.

---

FEBRUARY 3, 1910.—Referred to the Committee on the Library and ordered to be printed.

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S SUBSTITUTE

By PROF. BERNARD J. CIGRAND  
COPYRIGHT BY W. G. CHAPMAN



BRAHAM LINCOLN had a substitute who served as a defender of the Union through the bloody and epoch-making period of the Civil war. This assertion has been made many times before. It has aroused bitter controversy in various quarters; it has given birth to columns of print, both in and denial of its truth. Now, for the first time, evidence is here presented that the story of Lincoln's substitute is correct—evidence in the unassailable shape of an official acknowledgment from the federal government.

The exemption of the president of the United States from the taking up of arms, or serving on an actual field of battle, is provided for by a special statute drawn up to meet such a contingency. But there is nothing to prevent the nation's chief executive from sending forth a substitute to fight in his place, although Lincoln was the only occupant of the White House who ever took advantage of this fact. The man who represented in his person that of the martyred president was John Summerfield Staples, whose body now lies at rest in a little cemetery at Stroudsburg, Pa. The tombstone above his grave, photograph of which is here reproduced, testifies not only to Staples' war record, but states in granite letters the fact of his having served as Abraham Lincoln's substitute. The inscription in question reads as follows:

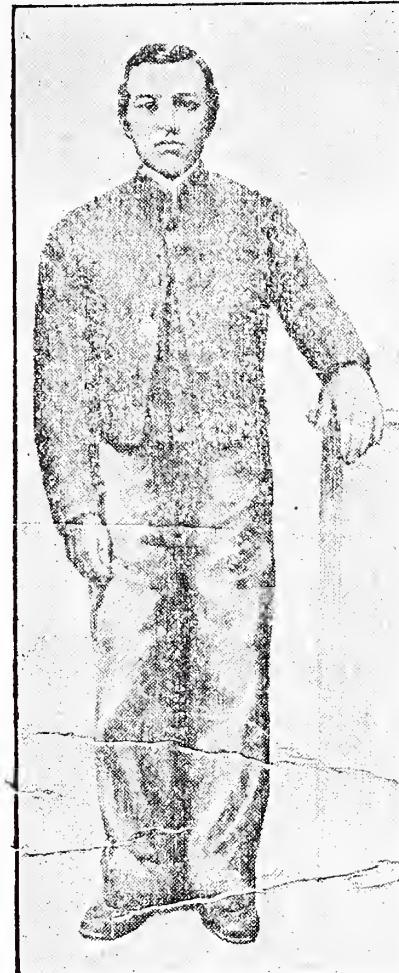
J. Summerfield Staples,  
a Private of  
Co. C, 176 Regt., P. V.  
Also a Member of the  
2 Regt. D. C. Vois., as a  
Substitute for  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Died Jan. 11, 1888,

Aged 43 Years, 4 Mos., 25 Days.

His grave also bears the G. A. R. marker, a metallic star upon which the words "Post 150" appear. A small American flag flutters in the breeze, but the outside world seems little informed as to the career of this patriotic and distinguished soldier boy.

I had heard the tradition that Lincoln during the dark days of 1864 had sent a substitute to the front. But to confirm the truth of the tradition was quite another matter. The popular opinion of those I consulted appeared to be that the tale of Lincoln's substitute belonged in the myth category, and had no more foundation in sober fact than the legend of Washington and the cherry tree. Men high



J. SUMMERFIELD STAPLES.  
"Lincoln's Substitute." From a Photograph Taken at the Time He Went to the Front in Lincoln's Stead.

in the ranks of the Grand Army of the Republic assured me that they were certain that "Old Abe" was unrepresented in the ranks of the boys in blue. For all that it seemed to me that the story was something more than one of those romantic incidents so frequently quoted as having occurred in the lives of famous men after they had passed over to the great majority; incidents lending color to laudatory biographical sketches, but rejected by the thoughtful historian as being formed of "the stuff dreams are made of." Lincoln, with his exalted ideals, his stern devotion to duty, his undying love for the Union and all that it represented, was exactly the type of man to consider himself at fault if he neglected to make every possible sacrifice in his power to the cause he held dearer than life.

I corresponded with the federal authorities at Washington on the sub-

ject, but the replies I received did not tend to bring me any closer to the goal. Instead they asserted positively that the reported tradition was entirely without foundation. A letter from the war department stated emphatic-



J. SUMMERFIELD STAPLES.  
"Lincoln's Substitute." From a Photograph Taken a Few Years Before His Death.

ally: "It does not appear from the official records of the department that President Lincoln ever furnished a substitute." Another informed me that "Abraham Lincoln was not liable to draft," a fact of which I was already well aware. Had not such been the case the employment of a substitute would have lost all significance.

But a personal search through the official records of the Civil war brought to light a reference to "Abraham Lincoln, principal, and John Staples, recruit, both of the District of Columbia." And on another page appeared an entry to the effect that Lincoln wished a representative recruit, and same was assigned as private to Company H of the Second regiment. D. C. infantry. With these entries as a base of operations it became possible to trace the substitute, and the discovery was made that John S. Staples was buried in Stroudsburg, Pa. Further details were furnished by Mr. John W. Burnett of Massachusetts, a comrade of Staples, in the following letter:

"I well recall the military career of J. S. Staples of my regiment. The awful losses of the Union army, east and west, were weighing heavily on dear Lincoln, and he, with others in public life, were considering the de-

sirability of having personal representatives in the field for those not eligible for service at all. According to my recollection, in the fall or late summer of 1864 Mr. Lincoln had a committee of citizens of the District of Columbia search for as perfect a specimen of physical manhood as could be found to become his representative recruit. This committee, or some of them, met my dear comrade (Staples) on the streets of Georgetown, and seeing his superbly compact form, and being at once satisfied that he was the man worthy to be Lincoln's representative in the army, they made a proposition to him, and the loyal boy—for he was but a boy—at once signified his desire to fill the honorable position. He was soon afterward introduced to President Lincoln, and the latter gladly chose him as his representative.

Although the communication received from Mr. Burnett was as convincing as one could wish, yet it was clear that without governmental sanction there still would remain doubting Thomases who would dispute the claim made in behalf of the dead soldier. Therefore, the facts in the case were laid before the federal authorities, and I received from the office of the commissioner of pension at Washington an official statement confirming the entire tradition concerning Lincoln and his substitute. This document reads as follows:

Department of the Interior,  
Bureau of Pensions

Washington, May 11, 1910.

"John Summerfield Staples, residing at Stroudsburg, Pa., filed an application for pension in 1882, stating that in the Civil war he had served in Company C, One Hundred and Seventy-sixth Pennsylvania militia, and afterwards in Company H, Second District of Columbia infantry, and that in his second enlistment he was a substitute for President Lincoln.

"The records show that said soldier enlisted November 2, 1862, in Company C, One Hundred and Seventy-sixth Pennsylvania drafted militia, that he was honorably discharged May 5, 1863, and that he afterward enlisted April 3, 1864, in Company H, Second District of Columbia volunteers, from which he was honorably discharged at Alexandria, Va., September 12, 1865, and the record also shows that in this last service he was enrolled as a representative recruit for Abraham Lincoln, who was not liable to draft.

"It is shown by the papers on file in this case that during the war President Lincoln decided that he would place in the army a substitute to the credit of the District of Columbia, and that he communicated his desire to do so to the provost marshal of the district, with a request that he select the person who should be placed in the service, and that the provost marshal then sent for Noble D. Larner, then a prominent citizen of this city, and stated to him the president's wishes, and Mr. Larner afterward succeeded in getting the substitute in the person

of Mr. Staples, and he was afterward mustered into the service.

"This is about all the information I can give you with reference to the matter, and would suggest that if you desire to learn anything about the private life of Mr. Staples you might write to the postmaster or some other person at Stroudsburg, Pa., where Mr. Staples lived and where he died January 11, 1888."

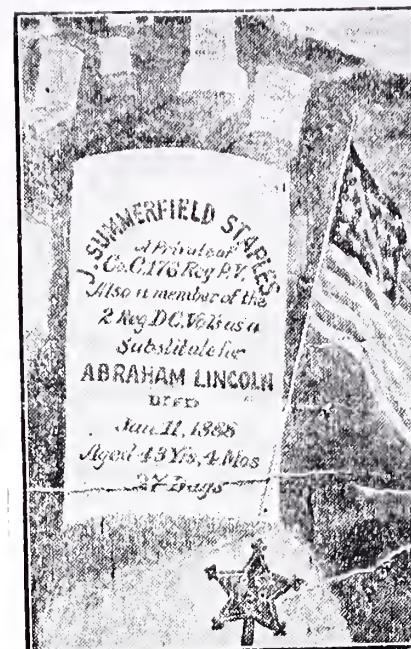
(signed) J. L. DAVENPORT,

Commissioner.

There are several people still living in Stroudsburg who knew Staples and remember that to him belonged the unique distinction of representing Lincoln on the field of battle. Among their number are J. T. Palmer, postmaster and principal of the public school; C. L. Drake, editor of the Stroudsburg Times, and Representative A. Mitchell Palmer of Pennsylvania. It was characteristic of Lincoln that he kept the matter from the public press, and a like modesty seems to have imposed silence on the young soldier who served his country so well.

One does not have to make a very exhaustive study of Lincoln's character in order to understand the motive which led him to send a substitute to represent him in the scenes of the bloody drama then being enacted throughout the land. His conscience was not of that easily satisfied variety which contents itself with allowing things to remain as they are, without indulging in exertion for the common good. His was the hand which was steering the Ship of State through tempest and crash of hostile guns, yet great as was the task assigned him, he perceived with the eagle eye that watched the course of action, a post still unfilled, an unoccupied niche where a combatant could be placed to strike in behalf of the Union. To that post he resolved to appoint a representative, that he might be practically in person—as he was already in spirit—on the red field of carnage. It was done quietly, in that simple, unostentatious manner that distinguished all of Lincoln's acts, whether in official or private life. He never played to the gallery, and the verdict of his own conscience was all he cared about.

While this is probably the only case in history where the leader of a nation sent a substitute to fill his place in the ranks of fighting men, a sort of precedent may be said to be found in the custom, but recently fallen into disuse, of appointing a "king's champion," who was supposed to offer his body in opposition to any challenger of the reigning monarch of Great Britain. Until the accession of the late King Edward VII. to the crown of England, this functionary was a member of the royal entourage. Whenever the new king was publicly crowned the "champion" appeared before



Grave of J. Summerfield Staples, in the Cemetery at Stroudsburg, Pa.

the assembled multitude clad in martial gear, and casting down a gauntlet upon the ground, defied to mortal combat any person or persons having quarrel with or denying the right of the potentate to reign over the land.

This custom dated back to the strenuous days when a monarch was also an active man-at-arms, and likely to meet in a hand-to-hand engagement with some persistent foeman at any time or place. Hence the institution of "king's champion," appointed to keep all challengers at bay, a hereditary honor, and one that was held for many generations by the descendants of the Dymoke family. But Edward VII., who possessed an unusually strong sense of the ridiculous, refused to permit this heroic burlesque of a mediaeval custom to be introduced into the splendid pageantry at his coronation and abolished the office of a warlike substitute forever.

The Classmate, February 10, 1923.

## Lincoln's Substitute

BY H. E. ZIMMERMAN

OF ALL that has been written of the life and public services of Abraham Lincoln, it is not generally known that he had a substitute who served in the army during the Civil War. The assertion that he had such a substitute has often been made and as often denied. The exemption of the President of the United States from taking up arms or serving on the actual field of battle was years ago provided for by special statute. Article Second, Section 2d of the Constitution of the United States states: "The President shall be commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States, and of the militia of the several States, when called into the active service of the United States." That Abraham Lincoln was the actual commander-in-chief no student of history can deny, as it is well known that at the most critical period of the war he personally ordered the movements of the army, in pursuance of a campaign which disclosed his extraordinary military genius.

Although commander-in-chief, there was nothing to prevent his sending a substitute to fight in his place. To the end that he might fulfill the oath of his great office, he resolved to be represented in the ranks, where a combatant in the field might, in person, strike actual blows in behalf of the Union.

The man who represented Lincoln in person was John Summerfield Staples, a young volunteer from Pennsylvania, aged about twenty-one years. Having been introduced to the President, this loyal young man signified a desire to fill the honorable position as his substitute and Lincoln gladly accepted him. The evidence of the employment of a substitute by Lincoln, is embraced in the following official statement of the Commissioner of Pensions:

"Washington:

Department of the Interior,  
"Bureau of Pensions.

Washington, D. C., May 11, 1910.

"John Summerfield Staples, residing at Stroudsburg, Pa., filed an application for pension in 1882, stating that in the Civil War he had served in Company C, One Hundred and Seventy-Sixth Pennsylvania Militia, and afterwards in Company H, Second District of Columbia Infantry, and that in his second enlistment he was a substitute for Abraham Lincoln.

"The records show that said soldier enlisted November 2, 1862, in Company C, One Hundred and Seventy-Sixth Pennsylvania drafted militia, that he was honorably discharged, May 5, 1863, and that he afterwards enlisted April 3, 1864, in Company H, Second District of Columbia Volunteers, from which he was honorably discharged at Alexandria, Va., September 12, 1865, and the record also shows that in this last service he was enrolled as a representative of Abraham Lincoln, who was not liable to draft.

"It is shown by the papers on file in this case that during the war, the President decided that he would place in the army a substitute to the credit of the District of Columbia, and that he communicated his desire to do so to the provost marshal of the

district, with a request that he select the person who should be placed in the service, and that the provost marshal then sent for Noble D. Larner, then a prominent citizen of this city, and stated to him the President's wishes, and Mr. Larner afterwards succeeded in getting the substitute in the person of Mr. Staples, and he was afterwards mustered into the service. (Signed)

"J. L. Davenport, Commissioner."

The man who thus represented in his person the martyred President, as already shown, and whose body now lies in the cemetery at Stroudsburg, Pa., is entitled to be enrolled among the heroes of the war for the Union.

( Pamphlet concerning John Summerfield Staples)

Some Account  
of  
John Summerfield Staples  
The  
Representative Recruit  
Of  
Abraham Lincoln  
In The  
Civil War

Compiled by  
L. D. Corman, M. D.  
100 copies privately printed  
1927

LINCOLN'S REPRESENTATIVE IN  
SERVICE.

Editor National Tribune: It seems a little unusual that N. A. Strait, of Washington, D. C., should be one of those to answer the question of E. H. Strait, of Ottawa, Ill., in regard to President Lincoln's representative, or substitute, and what became of him.

I will state that there is a record showing that John S. Staples enlisted Oct. 3, 1864, at Washington, D. C., for one year, as President Lincoln's representative, as a private in Co. H, 2d D. C. He was mustered out at Alexandria, Va., Sept. 12, 1865.

It also appears that Mr. Staples had a prior service in Co. C, 176th Pa. Drafted Militia, for nine months in 1862-1863, at which time his age is given as 18, postoffice address Stroudsburg, Monroe County, Pa. He died in Dover, N. J., Jan. 11, 1888, at the age of 43 years, leaving one minor child, Anna M. Mr. Staples received the sum of \$500 from the President, thru Hon. Noble D. Larner, of Washington, D. C.

John Summerfield Staples generally known as Summerfield to distinguish him from his father, was the sixth child of John L. Staples and Ann Wolfinger, born on Main Street, Stroudsburg, Monroe County, Pa., August 14, 1844, received a common school education, wrote a good hand, and first entered the military service of the United States during the Civil War as a private Co. C 176 Pa. Drafted Militia Inft., on November 3, 1862. Staples received no bounty for this service but his military record shows he was enrolled by Governor Curtin as a substitute for Robert Barry and undoubt- Barry was somewhat poorer and Staples somewhat better off for the substitution.

Staples description at this time was age 18, height 5 feet, 7 inches, light complexion, eyes and hair.

Three companies of the 176 Pa. D. M. Inft. were from Monroe County.

This regiment was organized at Philadelphia and moved by way of Chowan River to Newberne, N. C., Jan. 1 to 5, 1863.

Staples was taken sick on the march from Suffolk, Va. to Deep Hollow Landing on the Chowan River. The company morning report book shows him sent to Hospital, Newberne, Jan. 11, 1863. There is a record of him at Stanley General Hospital, Newberne, N. C., Jan. 24, 1863 as convalescent from remittent fever and he was discharged the service for disability May 5, 1863, "great debility and a broken down constitution, result of typhoid fever of nearly four months continuance."

Staples was brought home from the Hospital at Newberne by his father and was a pretty sick boy at that time, slowly recovering

his health but able to work during the winter of 1863-1864, and in April 1864 he went from his home in Stroudsburg to join his father in Washington, D. C.

During the spring, summer and fall of 1864, Staples and his father worked as carpenters at Arlington and at the government vessel repair yard at Georgetown.

The following statement was prepared by the late Philip F. Larner, son of N. D. Larner:

"Sometime after Mr. N. D. Larner had been discharged from the Army he was drafted to serve for three years under a call by the President. He then procured a substitute for himself and placed him in the Army. Sometime after this, he, in connection with others, formed what was known as the Third Ward Draft Club, its object being to secure money to purchase substitutes for those citizens of the Third Ward that might be drafted. In this effort the club was so successful as to procure substitutes enough to relieve all that were drafted in that ward except the last two who were sent to the Army.

Sometime afterwards President Lincoln decided that he would place in the Army a substitute to the credit of the District of Columbia and communicated his desire to the Provost Marshal of the District with the request that he select the gentleman who should fulfill his wishes. The Provost Marshal sent for Mr. Larner and stated to him the President's wishes and placed the matter in his hands. After considerable trouble, substitutes being scarce, he succeeded in getting one and had him sworn in as the President's substitute. He was dressed in his uniform and taken to the White House and introduced to the President who spoke very pleasantly

as to his duties as a soldier.

President Lincoln subsequently sent Mr. Larner a check on Riggs Bank in this city in payment of the price he had paid for the substitute."

Statements as to the price vary from \$300 to 1,000. The soldier's father told the man who erected the soldier's monument that the soldier received \$600 and he himself, \$50. A signed statement by the <sup>Soldier</sup> is in existence giving the amount as \$500 which statement is the best evidence. At the ~~the~~ time the soldier received this money he was not of age, his father was legally entitled to it and it is believed it went into the family exchequer where it was needed.

In addition to the \$500 received from Lincoln, Staples also received for this service, \$66.67, two installments of the \$100 bounty to men enlisting for one year under Act of July 4, 1864, he having served less than a year.

Staples and his father never forgot that the younger man represented Lincoln in the Army and during the life of the latter, he had prepared a number of broadsides 9 by  $11\frac{1}{2}$  inches on brown paper, reprinting the contemporary account in the New York Herald.

COMMITTEE

Chairman  
FRANK B. MICHAELS, P. C.,  
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U. S. Mail Service

ALFRED L. SNYDER, P. C.,  
Gen'l. Secy., Y. M. C. A.  
Secretary to Committee

# J. SUMMERFIELD STAPLES

Who Served in the Civil War in Lieu of President Lincoln--Not Liable to Draft

## MEMORIAL TABLET COMMITTEE

Sponsored by

ST. JOHN'S COMMANDERY, No. 186, A. & I.  
ORDER KNIGHTS OF MALTA

Stroudsburg, Pa.

October 16, 1933.

Lincoln National Life Foundation,  
R. Gerald McMurtry, Librarian,  
Fort Wayne,  
Indiana.

Dear Sir:

We most cordially request that you attend the unveiling and dedication of a Memorial Tablet erected on the new concrete bridge across Pocong River, Main Street, Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, in memory of John Summerfield Staples, who served with distinction in the Civil War in lieu of President Lincoln, not liable to draft.

This young man, a native of Stroudsburg, was selected, personally, by the great War President, to serve in his stead. History tells us that the President was very anxious to have a young man to serve in the army in place of him, and upon recommendation he selected young Staples. The records in the Adjutant General's office at Washington are as follow:

"John S. Staples enrolled and mustered into service at Philadelphia, Pa., November 3, 1862, as a Private, Co. C., 176 Pennsylvania Drafted Militia Infantry, and honorably discharged at New Bern, North Carolina, May 5, 1863.

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ORDER KNIGHTS OF MALTA

Stroudsburg, Pa.

He was enrolled and mustered into the service October 1, 1864, at Washington, D. C., as representative in lieu of Abraham Lincoln, not liable to draft. He was assigned to Company H, Second District of Columbia, Volunteer Infantry, and was mustered out and honorably discharged as a Private, September 12, 1865."

He was born August 14, 1845, died at Dover, New Jersey, January 11, 1888. He is buried in the Stroudsburg Cemetery, Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania.

We are very anxious, if any way possible, that you be present and participate in this service at two o'clock, Armistice Day, November 11, 1933.

Very truly yours,

*Frank B. Michaels*

Chairman of the Committee.

FBM:S





#### J. SUMMERFIELD STAPLES

1845-1888

Enrolled and mustered into service at Philadelphia, Pa., Nov. 3, 1862, as a Private, Co. C, 176th Pa. Drafted Militia Infantry. Honorary discharged at New Bern, N. C., May 5, 1863.

He was enrolled and mustered into the service October 1, 1864 at Washington, D. C., as a representative in lieu of

#### ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Not liable to draft. He was assigned to Co. H, 2nd District of Columbia Volunteer Infantry, and was mustered out and honorably discharged as a Private September 12, 1865.

Seventy years after he entered the army for President Lincoln, forty-six years after he died—yea, ninety years after his birth, public recognition will be recorded to

#### J. SUMMERFIELD STAPLES

Perhaps the proper closing word, with the best of propriety, might be taken from history of the Ancient Medes and Persians, which relates to Mordecai the Jew, and were from the lips of Haman the Agagite, "Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king (people) delighteth to honour."

---

**Memorial Tablet to J. Summerfield Staples Erected, Unveiled and Dedicated at High Noon Armistice Day, 1933, by St. John's Commandery No. 186, Ancient and Illustrious Order Knights of Malta**

Below—J. Summerfield Staples as a soldier boy in the Civil War. And—His grave in the Stroudsburg, Pa., Cemetery.



PEN AND INK SKETCH OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

Below—Tablet in memory of J. Summerfield Staples on bridge, Stroudsburg, Pa.

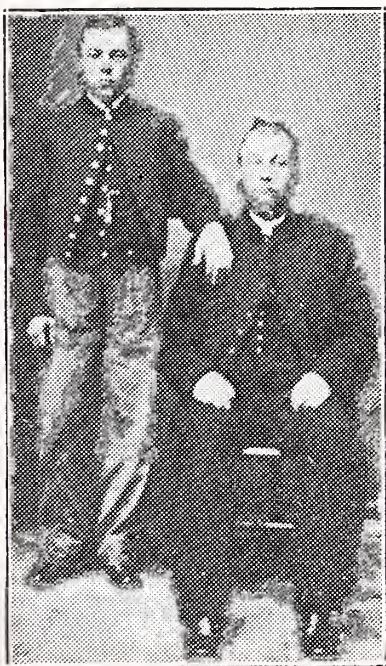




**“FATHER ABE.”**

President Lincoln Leaving an Army Camp.

On October 1, 1864, he and his father were walking up Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington; they were met by a man by the name of Sainer, who accosted them saying “I am looking for a young man to represent the President in the army as a recruit.” Addressing Summerfield, he said, “Will you accept?” The boy replied, “If my father consents.” The consent was given; they proceeded to the Provost Marshal’s office and was accepted and mustered in. On Monday morning, Mr. Sainer, Provost General Ting, a reporter of the New York Herald, Summerfield, his father, and several others



J. Summerfield Staples and his father, Chaplain John S. Staples

went to President Lincoln’s offices. Mr. Sainer, addressing the President, said, “Mr. President, I present to you your representative recruit, Mr. J. S. Staples.” The President arose, taking the young man by the hand, concluding his talk of several minutes by saying, “You will be one of the fortunate ones.” What a dramatic moment in the life of J. Summerfield Staples; in the life of the Rev. John L. Staples, the father; in the life of Ann Wollfinger Staples, the mother; in the life of the President of the United States, and in the history of the United States.

# PROGRAM



Chairman, FRANK B. MICHAELS, P. C.

Bugle Call..... American Legion

Singing—"My Country 'Tis of Thee"..... Chorus

Scripture Reading..... Rev. J. Ross Stonesifer

Invocation..... Rev. Enock F. Hoffman

Unveiling and Dedicating Tablet

.....By Donald B. Cahoon, Esq., Scranton, Pa.  
Supreme Commander, A. & I. O. K. of M.

Assisted By..... Little Eleanor Seymour, Age 10, Dixon, Pa.  
Grand Niece of J. Summerfield Staples

Tablet Accepted..... By Hon. Samuel E. Shull  
President Judge Monroe and Pike County Courts  
Who will make the dedicatory address.

Response..... By C. H. Buckius,  
District Engineer, Pennsylvania Department of Highways

Address—"Armistice Day"..... George C. Lawry  
Grand Commander of Pennsylvania, A. & I. O. K. of M.

Eight-Gun Salute..... American Legion

Singing—"Star Spangled Banner"..... Chorus

Benediction..... Rev. Frank H. Blatt

REFERENCE REPORT  
ILLINOIS STATE HISTORICAL LIBRARY

Date 9 Nov. 1939

JOHN SUMMERFIELD STAPLES

Besides the article by E. S. Walker in the Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, v. 5, pp. 80-82, we have the following material on Lincoln's substitute, John Summerfield Staples:

Carman, L. D. Some account of John Summerfield Staples, the representative recruit of Abraham Lincoln in the Civil War. (Washington, D. C., 1927. 100 copies privately printed.) 16p.

Cigrand, B. J. The true story of Abraham Lincoln's substitute... (from the Boston Sunday Post, 12 February 1911) (Our copy is a photograph of the original article.)

Barton, W. E. The life of Abraham Lincoln. Indianapolis, Ind., 1925. v. 2, pp. 241-2, footnote.

Possibly some of these titles are in the St. Louis Public Library.

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S SUBSTITUTE IN THE CIVIL WAR.

By REV. E. S. WALKER

Of all that has been written of the life and public services of Abraham Lincoln, it is not generally known that he had a substitute who served in the army during the Civil War.

The assertion that he had such a substitute has often been made, and is often denied. The exemption of the President of the United States from taking up arms in serving on the actual field of battle, was very appropriate for by a special statute, to meet such a contingency. Article Second, section 2nd, of the Constitution of the United States provides that the President shall be commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States and of the militia of the several states when called into actual service of the United States. That Abraham Lincoln was the actual commander-in-chief is a slender historical basis, as it is well known that during the critical period of the war, he personally ordered the movements of the army in pursuance of a campaign which displayed the extraordinary military genius.

Although commander-in-chief, there was nothing to prevent him from sending a substitute to fight in the field, although Lincoln was the only president who ever did so advantageously for his country. In the end, however, he chose the services of the great officer and commander-in-chief, resolved to be represented in the ranks who could command on the field of battle, might in person strike a blow in behalf of the Union.

The man who represented him in person was ~~the~~ **SUMMERSFIELD STAPLES**, a young volunteer from Pennsylvania.

Yuma aged about twenty one years. Having been introduced to the President this loyal boy wished I had desire to fill the honorable position as his substitute who gladly accepted him as his representative.

The evidence of the fact herein set forth, relating to the employment of his substitute by Lincoln, is embodied in the following official statement of the Commissioner of Pensions in Washington.

Department of the Interior,  
Bureau of Pensions.

Washington, May 11, 1910.

John Sumnerfield Staples residing at St. Cloud being the filer of application for pension in 1892 stating that in the Civil war he had served in Company C, One Hundred and Seventy sixth Pennsylvania militia and afterwards in Company H, Second District of Columbia Infantry, and that in his second enlistment he was a substitute for President Lincoln.

The Record shows that he was first enlisted November 2, 1862, in C, One Hundred and Seventy sixth Pennsylvania Militia, that he was honorably discharged May 5, 1863, and that he afterward enlisted April 7, 1864, in Company H, Second District of Columbia volunteers, from which he was honorably discharged at Alexandria, Va., September 12, 1865, and the record also shows that the last service he was enrolled as a representative of Jonathan Larned, who was not liable to debt.

It is known by the papers on file in this case that during the war President Lincoln desired that he should place in the army a substitute to the credit of the District of Columbia and that he communicated to him from time to time the names of men of the District who was a request that he admit the person who should be placed in the service, and that the person named over and over Mr. J. T. Larned, then a prominent citizen of this city and stated to have the President's scatres and Mr. Larned afterwards

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The assertion that he had such a substitute has often been made and as often denied. The exemption of the President of the United States from taking up arms or serving on the actual field of battle, was very well provided for by a special statute to meet such a contingency. Article Second, section 2nd, of the Constitution of the United States provides that the President shall be commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States and of the militia of the several states when called into the actual service of the United States. That Abraham Lincoln was the actual commander-in-chief is a slender history of the Army and it is well known that at the critical period of the war he personally directed the movements of the Army in the course of a campaign which displayed the extraordinary military genius.

Although commander-in-chief, there was nothing to prevent him from sending a substitute to fight in his place, although Lincoln was the only president who ever did so. In fact, he did so and that he did so is well known. If the great office of command-in-chief is to be represented to the public when a combination in the field of war might in person strike a blow in behalf of the Union.

The man who represented him in person was John SUMMERSFIELD STAPLE, a young volunteer from Peoria.

varia aged about twenty one years. Having been introduced to the President, this loyal boy signified his desire to fill the honorable position as his substitute who gladly accepted him as his representative.

The evidence of the fact herein set forth, relating to the employment of his substitute by Lincoln, is embraced in the following official statement of the Commissioner of Pensions in Washington:

Department of the Interior,

Bureau of Pensions.

Washington, May 16, 1900.

John Summerfield Staples residing at Frederick, filed an application for pension in 1882, stating that in the Civil war he had served in Company C, One Hundred and Seventy-ninth Pennsylvania militia, and afterwards in Company H, Second District of Columbia Infantry, and that in his second enlistment he was a substitute for President Lincoln.

The Record of the said soldier culminated November 2, 1862, in C, One Hundred and Seventy-ninth Pennsylvania Militia, that he was honorably discharged May 5, 1862, and that he afterward enlisted April 1, 1864, in Company H, Second District of Columbia volunteers, from which he was honorably discharged at Alexandria, Nov. September 12, 1865, and the record also shows that in this last service he was enrolled as a representative of Abraham Lincoln who was not listed as such.

It is known by the papers made in this case that during the war President Lincoln desired that he would place in the army a substitute to the credit of the District of Columbia, and he consequently had him to do so to the satisfaction of the District with a request that he would the person who should be placed in the service, and that the person enroled should wear the name of Lincoln, then a prominent citizen of this city and should be from the President's widow and Mr. Lincoln afterwards

succeeded in getting the substitute, in the person of Mr. Staples, and he was afterward mustered into the service.

If you desire to learn anything about the private life of Mr. Staples, you might write to the post master, at Stroudsburg, Pa., where Mr. Staples lived and where he died January 11, 1888."

(Signed)

J. L. DAVENPORT, Commissioner

The man who thus represented in his person the martyr of President, as above shown and whose body now lies in the cemetery at Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, is entitled to enrollment among the heroes of the war for the Union.

The tombstone which marks his last resting place bears this inscription:

J. SUMMERFIELD STAPLES

A PRIVATE OF

Co. C, 176 REGT. P. V

ALSO A MEMBER OF THE

2 REGT. D. C. VOL. AS A

SUBSTITUTE FOR

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

DIED JAN. 11, 1888.

AGED 43 YEARS, 4 MOS. 25 DAYS.

The two photographs of J. Summerfield Staples represent him as he appeared, respectively, at the time he went to the front, 1863, and the second a few years before his death.

EDWIN SAWYER WALKER

# THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN ASSOCIATION

LOGAN HAY, PRESIDENT

ROBERT E. MILLER, TREASURER

PAUL M. ANGLE, SECRETARY

HARRY E. PRATT, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY



## PURPOSES:

"To observe each anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln; to preserve and make more readily accessible the landmarks associated with his life; and actively to encourage, promote and aid the collection and dissemination of authentic information regarding all phases of his life and career."

FIRST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

July 17, 1940

Dear Gregory:

There is an article on Staples in the Journal of the Ill. State Hist. Soc. Vol. 5 p. 80. There is a little pamphlet published on him, I believe by Dr. Carman of Washington, D.C. which you can find in the Ill. State Hist. Lib. when you come up. I do not have a copy of the Carmen item, but I do of the Journal article and will be glad to loan it to you if you wish to read it or copy it for you if you prefer. Just make your wishes known and I promise not to disagree with you, as some times did a certain party we once met on the Hegira.

Let me know when you are coming to Spg. because I would like to help entertain your friends. Have a jalopy that we can transport them to St. Louis.

Going to Michigan Friday the 19th. but will be back on Monday the 22. in the evening. Will be here the 23d. and on the 24th. I expect to be in Dallas City, Ill. to help them dedicate a marker commemorating Lincoln's speech there on Oct. 23, 1858.

Had a fine letter from Seaberg, Bullard, Harkness and others. That was a great trip.

Sincerely,

*Harry E. Pratt*

## WAR DEPARTMENT

## THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE

IN REPLY  
REFER TOA.G. 201  
Staples, John S.  
(7-17-40) OR

WASHINGTON

July 19, 1940.

Mr. R. Alsy Gregory,  
8932 Tudor Ave.,  
St. Louis, Missouri.

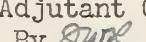
Dear Sir:

This is in reply to your letter of recent date in which you request information concerning John Summerfield Staples, said to have served in the 176th Pennsylvania D. M. Infantry, and as a substitute for Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War.

The records of this office show that one John S. Staples, not found on the records as John Summerfield Staples, was enrolled and mustered into service at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 3, 1862, as a private of Company C, 176th Regiment Pennsylvania Drafted Militia Infantry, Civil War, and was honorably discharged at New Bern, North Carolina, as a private, May 5, 1863, by reason of disability. The records further show that he served as a representative recruit, not as a substitute.

He was enrolled and mustered into service October 1, 1864, at Washington, D. C., as a representative in lieu of Abraham Lincoln, not liable to draft. He was assigned to Company H, 2nd Regiment District of Columbia Volunteer Infantry, and was mustered out and honorably discharged as a private, September 12, 1865.

Very truly yours,

  
Major General,  
The Adjutant General.  
By 

# LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor  
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 695

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

August 3, 1942

## SUBSTITUTING FOR LINCOLN

It is not known, generally, that there served in the Union Army a soldier by the name of J. Summerfield Staples who at the President's request became his substitute in the ranks of the Union Army. The two provisions in the draft law which called for the most severe criticisms were the privileges which allowed a drafted man, to substitute \$300 for himself, or to substitute another man for himself. It was under this last provision that the President, although exempt from the draft by virtue of his office as Commander in Chief of the Army, desired to be represented by a substitute.

Lincoln prepared a discussion in 1863 in which he explained the purpose of these enactments about money and men substitutes which seems so undemocratic to us today. Even Lincoln felt then that the inequality suggested by the practice could "only be perfectly cured by sweeping both provisions away." It may be of interest to present verbatim Lincoln's opinions on the bounty system. They were prepared about August 15, 1863.

"Much complaint is made of that provision of the conscription law which allows a drafted man to substitute three hundred dollars for himself; while, as I believe, none is made of that provision which allows him to substitute another man for himself. Nor is the three hundred dollar provision objected to for unconstitutionality; but for inequality, for favoring the rich against the poor. The substitution of men is the provision, if any, which favors the rich to the exclusion of the poor. But this, being a provision in accordance with an old and well-known practice in the raising of armies, is not objected to. There would have been great objection if that provision had been omitted. And yet, being in, the money provision really modifies the inequality which the other introduces. It allows men to escape the service who are too poor to escape but for it. Without the money provision, competition among the more wealthy might, and probably would, raise the price of substitutes above three hundred dollars, thus leaving the man who could raise only three hundred dollars no escape from personal service. True, by the law as it is, the man who cannot raise so much as three hundred dollars, nor obtain a personal substitute for less, cannot escape; but he can come quite as near escaping as he could if the money provision were not in the law. To put it another way: is an unobjectionable law which allows only the man to escape who can pay a thousand dollars made objectionable by adding a provision that any one may escape who can pay the smaller sum of three hundred dollars? This is the exact differ-

ence at this point between the present law and all former draft laws. It is true that by this law a somewhat larger number will escape than could under a law allowing personal substitutes only; but each additional man thus escaping will be a poorer man than could have escaped by the law in the other form. The money provision enlarges the class of exempts from actual service simply by admitting poorer men into it. How then can the money provision be a wrong to the poor man? The inequality complained of pertains in greater degree to the substitution of men, and is really

1940, gives a list of a few of the celebrated men who followed Lincoln's example in supplying substitutes: "Alexander Agassiz, Edward Everett, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Russell Lowell and John G. Palfrey of Massachusetts, R. E. Fulton of New York, J. K. Morehead and David Wilmot of Pennsylvania, Justin S. Morrill of Vermont, Joshua F. Speed of Kentucky and William B. Allison of Iowa."

Thirty years ago Bernard Y. Cigrand gathered some facts about Staples and interviewed one of his comrades who tells about Lincoln's selection in these words:

*Inscription on tombstone at Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania:*  
"J. Summerfield Staples,  
a Private of  
Co. C., 176 Regt., P. V.  
Also a Member of the  
2 Reg. D. C. Vols., as a  
Substitute for  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
Died Jan. 11, 1888  
Aged 43 Years, 4 Mos., 25 Days."

modified and lessened by the money provision. The inequality could only be perfectly cured by sweeping both provisions away. This, being a great innovation, would probably leave the law more distasteful than it now is."

One of the more humane workings of this substitute system is to be found in the case of a father who desired to substitute for a son who had enlisted under age. He talked with Lincoln about it who later wrote to Major General Meade.

"Bannister wants to take his son's place and have the boy discharged and sent home to his mother, who is back there alone. I can see no objection, if it would not be subversive to discipline in your army, to discharging the boy and taking the father in his place. If this meets with your views I would like it done."

There is no evidence that Lincoln made undue display of the fact that he had secured a substitute to represent him in the ranks and the incident is seldom given attention in Lincoln biographies. It was not unusual for some outstanding men too old for service, or who were not subject to draft, to desire to be represented in the army and it is evident Lincoln wished to encourage the appeal for representative recruits.

Mildred Emery Jones, in the *Abraham Lincoln Quarterly* for December

"According to my recollection, in the fall or late summer of 1864 Mr. Lincoln had a committee of citizens of the District of Columbia search for as perfect a specimen of physical manhood as could be found to become his representative recruit. This committee, or some of them, met my dear comrade (Staples) on the streets of Georgetown, and seeing his superbly compact form, and being at once satisfied that he was the man worthy to be Lincoln's representative in the army, they made a proposition to him, and the loyal boy—for he was but a boy—at once signified his desire to fill the honorable position. He was soon afterward introduced to President Lincoln, and the latter gladly chose him as his representative."

J. Summerfield Staples was born in Monroe County, Pennsylvania on August 14, 1845. He was a descendant of John Staples, a Revolutionary War soldier and a son of John L. Staples, an ordained minister of the Methodist Church, who in 1864 was Chaplain of the Second Regiment, District of Columbia Volunteers. Young Staples, on November 3, 1862, when but seventeen years old enlisted as a private and was honorably discharged in 1863 because of physical disabilities due to typhoid fever. He was convalescing by April 1864 when he appeared in Washington and was selected by Mr. Lincoln as his substitute.

Staples' enlistment as the President's substitute is recorded as of October 1, 1864 and credited to the third ward of the District of Columbia. Two days later, fitted out in his new uniform, in company with his father and government officials he called on the President and received his good wishes. Staples served for eleven months in Company H, 2nd Dist. of Columbia Infantry and for three months was stationed at Briggs Barracks, Alexandria, Virginia. It was at Alexandria where he was mustered out on September 12, 1865, five months after the President for whom he was substituting had expired.

# Tombstone Only Staples Memory

By Frank W. French

## MEMPHIS FAIR

Memphis, Tenn., Aug. 20.—A large crowd of visitors and tourists turned out to the Memphis Fair yesterday, the first day of the annual exhibition, which opened at 10 a.m. The weather was cool and pleasant.

There were many exhibits of interest, including a display of the new and improved breeds of cattle, and a large number of horses.

At 1 p.m. a large crowd gathered to see the first performance of the new musical comedy, "The Girl from the South," which was well received.

At 2 p.m. a large crowd gathered to see the first performance of the new musical comedy, "The Girl from the South," which was well received.

At 3 p.m. a large crowd gathered to see the first performance of the new musical comedy, "The Girl from the South," which was well received.

At 4 p.m. a large crowd gathered to see the first performance of the new musical comedy, "The Girl from the South," which was well received.

At 5 p.m. a large crowd gathered to see the first performance of the new musical comedy, "The Girl from the South," which was well received.

At 6 p.m. a large crowd gathered to see the first performance of the new musical comedy, "The Girl from the South," which was well received.

At 7 p.m. a large crowd gathered to see the first performance of the new musical comedy, "The Girl from the South," which was well received.

At 8 p.m. a large crowd gathered to see the first performance of the new musical comedy, "The Girl from the South," which was well received.

At 9 p.m. a large crowd gathered to see the first performance of the new musical comedy, "The Girl from the South," which was well received.

At 10 p.m. a large crowd gathered to see the first performance of the new musical comedy, "The Girl from the South," which was well received.

At 11 p.m. a large crowd gathered to see the first performance of the new musical comedy, "The Girl from the South," which was well received.

At 12 p.m. a large crowd gathered to see the first performance of the new musical comedy, "The Girl from the South," which was well received.

At 1 p.m. a large crowd gathered to see the first performance of the new musical comedy, "The Girl from the South," which was well received.



W. A. Staples, Member of the Memphis City Council, always turns out to the fairs on the first day, as shown above.

U. S. States, used to have a bill introduced for a memorial to be erected in his memory in the Court House square, but nothing came of it.

In 1900, the King of May, a man from the city, on the 4th of July, was killed in a bridge accident, but the bridge was the first of April.

The man, who was a member of the Memphis City Council, was killed in a bridge accident, but the bridge was the first of April.

CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE

"NATURE'S MASTERPIECE"

# Pocono Mountains VACATION BUREAU



STROUDSBURG, PA.  
Telephone 3598

January 30, 1960

Mr. Ralph Gregory  
8932 Tudor St.  
St. Louis 14, Mo.

Mrs. Horace G. Walters  
Curator Monroe Co. Hist. Soc'y  
of Pennsylvania  
2-2880

Dear Mr. Gregory:

In reply to your letter of January 20th we would suggest you contact Mr. John Appel, 1515 Spruce Street, Stroudsburg, Pa. for information regarding John Summerfield Staples. Dr. Appel is president of the local historical society and I am sure he would know if it is possible to get any pictures of Mr. Staples.

Sincerely,

Marion J. Meyer  
Secretary

1/m

Letter Feb 5th

30593 200

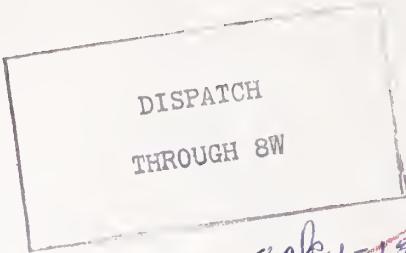
# GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION



National Archives and Records Service  
Washington 25, D. C.

February 19, 1960

Miss Alsy Gregory  
8932 Tudor Avenue  
St. Louis 14, Missouri



✓ 148

Paisley

Dear Miss Gregory:

The Adjutant General's Office has sent us your recent letter for reply.

War Department records in our custody do not include copies of discharge certificates issued to John S. Staples as these were prepared in original form only and given directly to the soldier.

We do have, however, a compiled record of military service for John S. Staples as a private in Company C, 176 Pennsylvania Infantry (Drafted Militia), Union Army, which includes a "Certificate of Disability for Discharge"; and another compiled record for him as a private in Company H, 2 District of Columbia Infantry, which includes his enlistment paper as a "representative recruit" for Abraham Lincoln, who was not liable to draft.

We can furnish you xerographic reproductions of the first file described for ninety cents; the second for \$1.05, or both at a total cost of \$1.95. Remittance should be made by check or money order payable to the General Services Administration and mailed to the National Archives and Records Service, Washington 25, D. C.

Sincerely yours

*E. D. Parker*  
for Victor Gondos, Jr.  
Archivist in Charge  
Civil War Branch

Return to  
Paisley  
8932 Tudor Av  
Saint Louis 14  
Mrs.

*for E. D. Parker*

Purpose: "Preserving the Best of the Past and the Present for Posterity."



# The Monroe County Historical Society

HEADQUARTERS: THE STROUD COMMUNITY HOUSE

STROUDSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

July 28, 1960

Mr. Ralph Alsy Gregory  
8932 Tudor Avenue  
St. Louis 14, Missouri

Dear Mr. Gregory:

If you will send one dollar to our curator, Mrs. Horace Walters, 751 Milford Road, East Stroudsburg, Pa., she will be glad to have a glossy print of Summerfield Staples prepared for you. Mrs. Walters has a photograph negative from which she will have to order a print to be made.

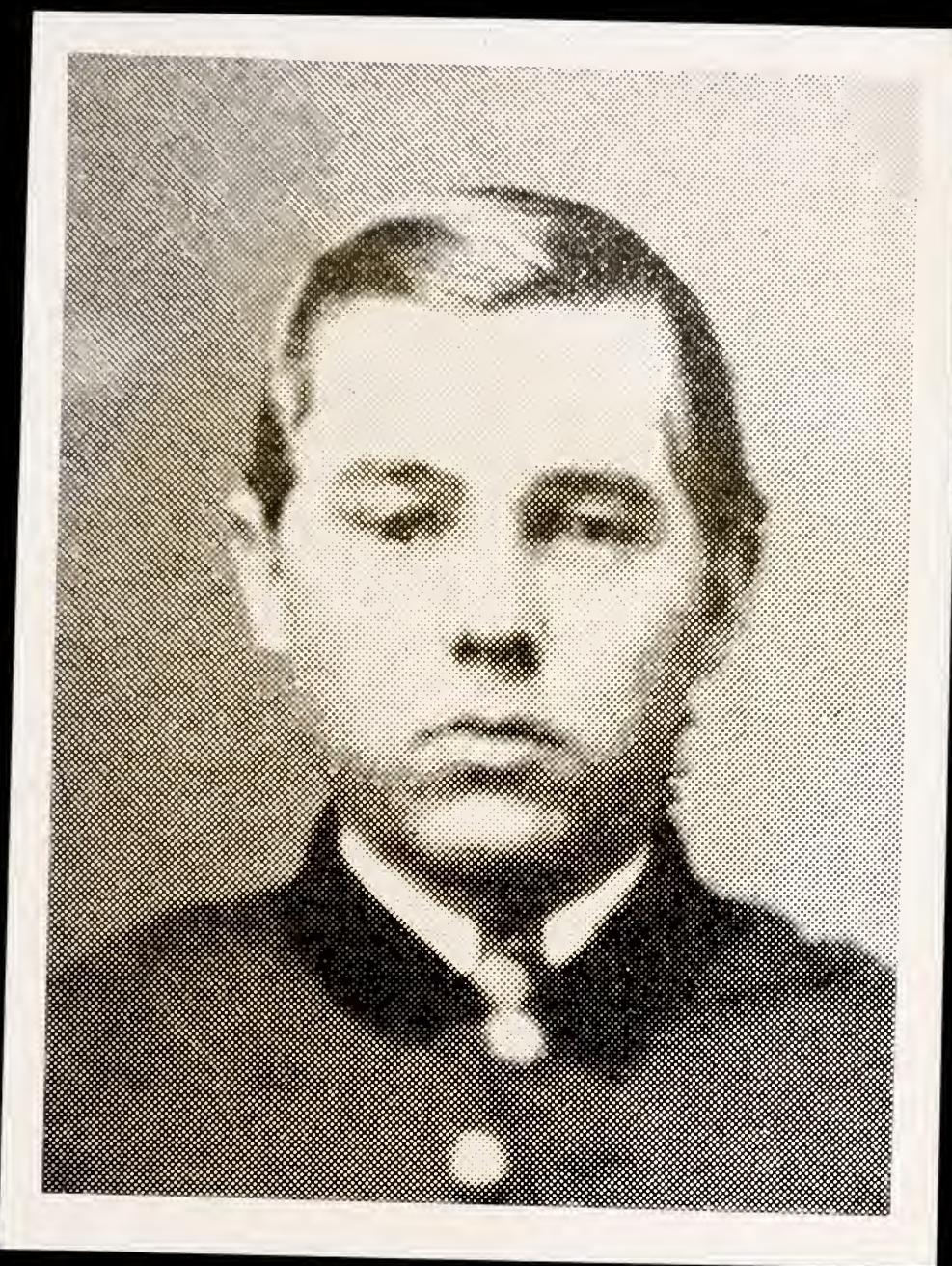
You will find Mrs. Walters to be ready to take care of this as soon as possible. If I can be of any further service, do not hesitate to communicate with me. My best wishes to you for the completion of your article.

Sincerely yours,

*John C. Appel*  
John C. Appel, President

*Letter Aug 12*





100 - Encouraged Stephen  
Kings of the world to  
start their  
own magazine  
and begin  
to publish

## LINCOLN'S SUBSTITUTE IN THE WAR

In a cemetery in Stroudsburg, Pa., there is a tombstone which bears this inscription:

J. SUMMERFIELD STAPLES.  
A Private of  
Co. C, 178 Regt. P. V.  
Also a member of the  
2d Regt. D. C. Vols. as a  
Substitute for  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN.  
Died Jan. 11, 1888.  
Aged 43 Years, 4 Mos., 25 Days.

Many who read this memorial to a departed soldier will learn, doubtless for the first time, that Abraham Lincoln was represented in the field in the civil war by a substitute and that it was on his own motion that he had a proxy at the front. Dr. B. J. Cigrand has written an interesting account of this civil war incident.

President Lincoln was ex-officio commander in chief of the Union forces which waged war for four years against secession. He was not subject to the operation of the draft law and hence was under no legal or martial obligation to have a substitute, but he chose as a matter of patriotism to be represented in that way.

During the four years of his administration President Lincoln devoted himself assiduously to the working out and execution of campaigns at the front. Those close to him in Washington in those trying days say that he was not only the constitutional, but the actual commander in chief, and that he disclosed a military genius equal to that of the ablest generals under him.

When the President made known his desire to send a substitute to the front the fact was communicated to the provost marshal of the District of Columbia with the request that he select a man for the purpose. The provost marshal in turn consulted Noble D. Larner of Washington, and that gentleman selected J. Summerfield Staples to represent the President of the United States. Staples was a volunteer from Pennsylvania and at the time of his selection as a substitute he had just reached his majority. He was introduced to the President and went away to war with the blessings and good wishes of the great commoner.

The records of the bureau of pensions at Washington show that Staples, then residing at Stroudsburg, filed an application for a pension in 1882. In his application he declared that he had served in Company C, One Hundred and Seventy-sixth Pennsylvania drafted militia, that he was honorably discharged May 5, 1863, and that, while in Washington, he again enlisted on April 3, 1864, in Company H, Second District of Columbia Volunteers, from which he was honorably discharged at Alexandria, Va., on Sept. 12, 1865. It appears from the military records at Washington that in his re-enlistment service as a volunteer Staples was enrolled as a representative of Abraham Lincoln. Staples drew his pension until 1888, when his death took place.

Noble D. Larner, who procured the services of Staples for the President, was a native of Washington and later a capitalist. He was then a young man of 33. In 1863 he was a clerk in the Department of Interior. He served three months in the civil war in the original National Rifles of Washington. For thirty years he was an active member of the Masonic order. At one time he was general grand high priest of the United States.





